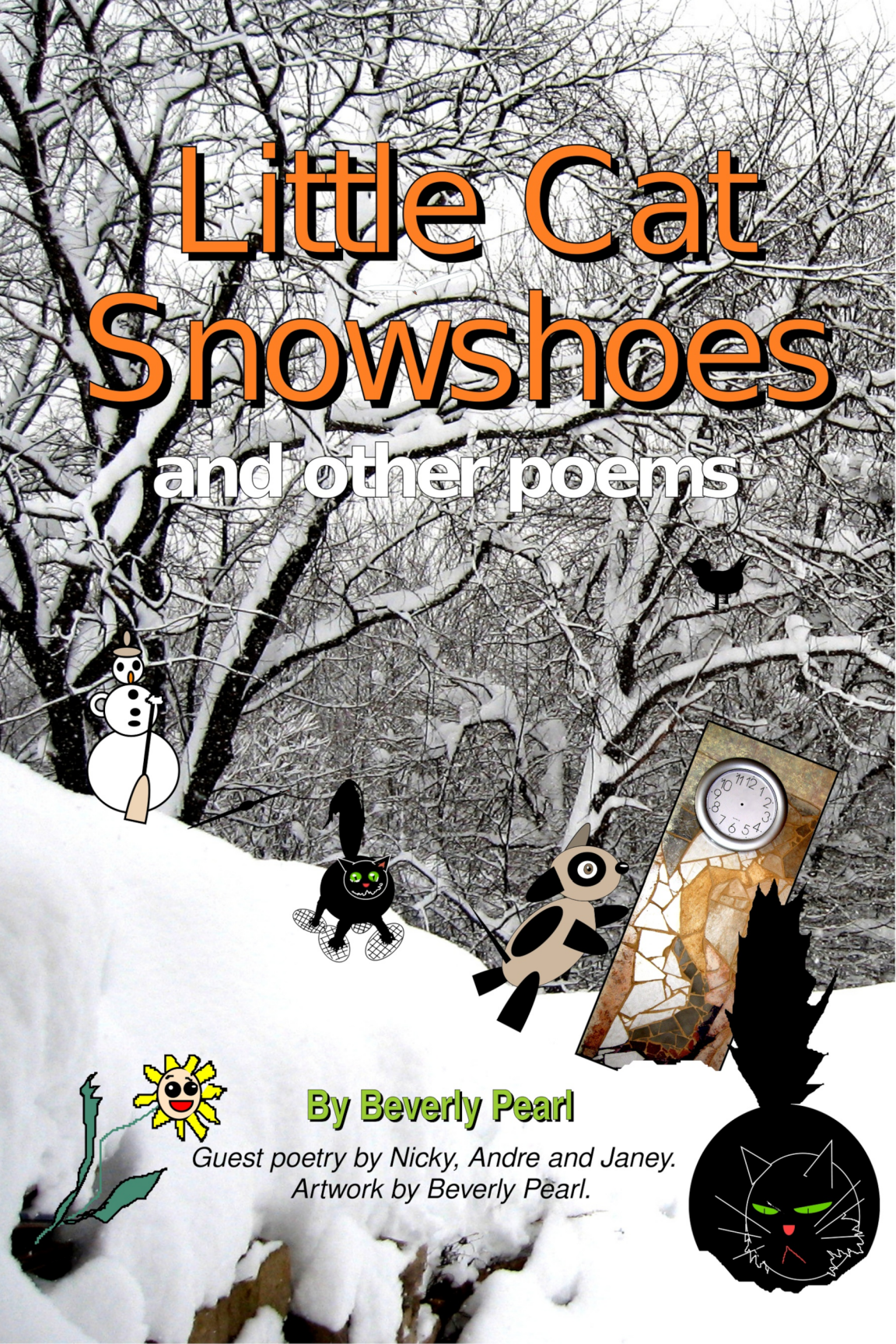
Little Cat Snowshoes

and other poems



By Beverly Pearl

Guest poetry by Nicky, Andre and Janey.
Artwork by Beverly Pearl.

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For Marvia

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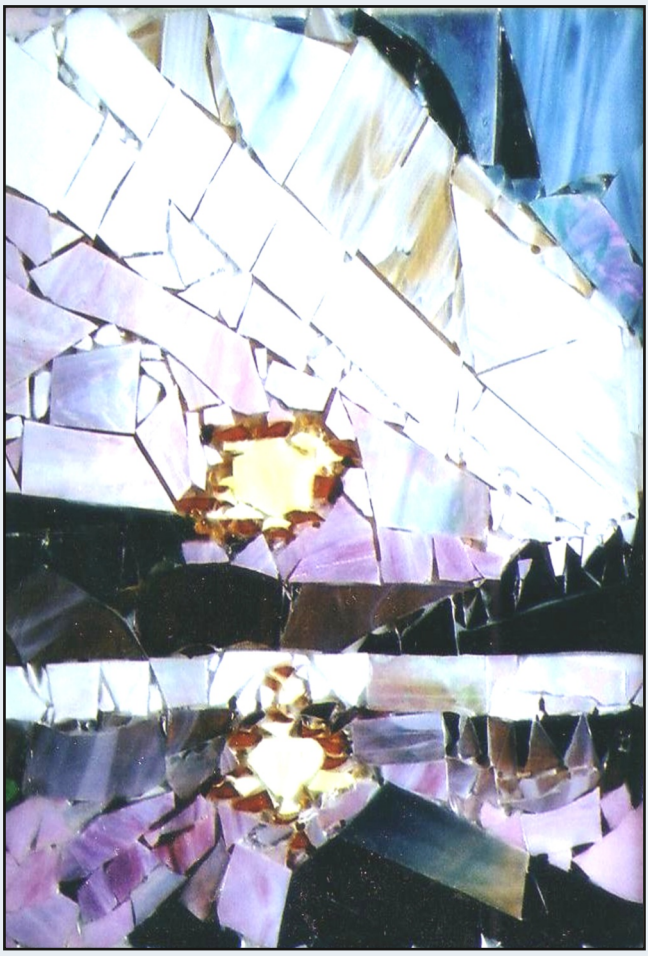


Little Cat Snowshoes

Kitty seems stuck
in this snowy abyss.
Little cat snowshoes
would help her with this.
Up to her belly
she sinks with each jump,
sending snow flying
she lands with a 'flump'.
I tried to stop her.
She ran through the door.
Kitty had never
been in snow before.
Now she is learning
the worst place to go
is out of a warm house
and into cold snow.
So, like a blizzard,
wet cat rushes in,
dripping and sneezing
and licking her chin.
Frost on her belly
and whiskers of flakes
turn into water
so cold that she aches.
Kitty looks skinny.
She's licking wet fur.
Warmer already,
she's starting to purr.
Now she's more careful,
though snow fun she'll miss.
Little cat snowshoes
would help her with this!

Crackpot

Broken pieces
live again-
'fun for fun's sake',
now and then.
Nothing deep here
('cept the pot).
Dark and empty?
Maybe not.
Someone's pottery
is changed
to a picture...
rearranged.
What you see
is what you get.
Do you see
a message yet?
The medium is the message.

The Hug

Like a flower petal falling,
like a daisy in the breeze,
like warm chocolate in the winter-
That's the feel of Mommy's squeeze.

When I'm always making errors
and I feel small as a bug,
won't you hold me on your knee then?
...'cause I really need a hug.

If I see my mommy tired
and she has too much to do
I always check to see if
Mommy needs some hugging too.

Froggy Freedom

Fergus Froggy, feeling free,
tickles top of tallest tree.
Leaping large,
fleeing far,
jumping jack
spring silent.

William wombat waited warm,
sleepless, seeing sandy storm.
Cringing close,
Clinging claws,
Hiding hole
protecting.

Silly Sally saw some sheep,
laughing loudly, lunging, leap
Wooly, warm
loving life.
Pasture pep,
sheep showoffs.

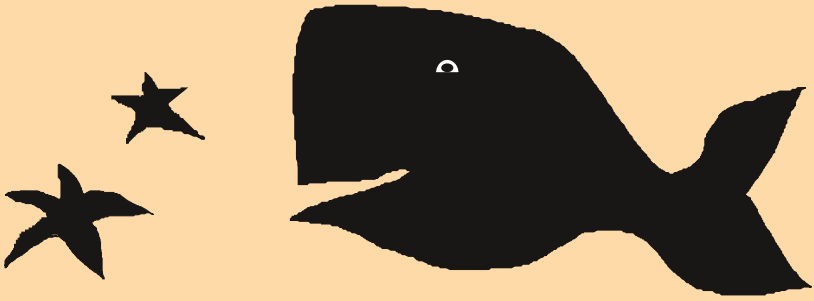
Cawing, calling, Conrad Crow
seeing sunshine soften snow.
Family flock,
flying free,
grouping grand.
Crow chaos.

Tell Me a Story

Tell me a story
of scallops and things,
of starfish and blowfish and wales.
Show me land mammals
and birds with big wings
and monkeys that swing from their tails.

Tell me the dinosaurs
lived long ago
and made the earth shake when they walked.
Show how the pterosaurs
flew too and fro-
ancient sharks- how they swam, what they stalked...

Tell me of all of
life's travel through time,
of insects that flew through it all.
Then show me some markings
with hand prints like mine
in deep, ancient caves, on the wall.



Who Would Have Thought?

Who would have thought that someday we would share
with the paupers and kings of the world,
freely, our thoughts and our dreams, each small care,
and to watch world events as unfurled.

When I am home with an essay to write
that I left just a little too long,
that's when the internet helps with my plight
with research sites where you can't go wrong.

Wickis and BlueSky and Google—free-thought-
Free expression wherever you live.
Share education that cannot be bought
and the learning this freedom can give.

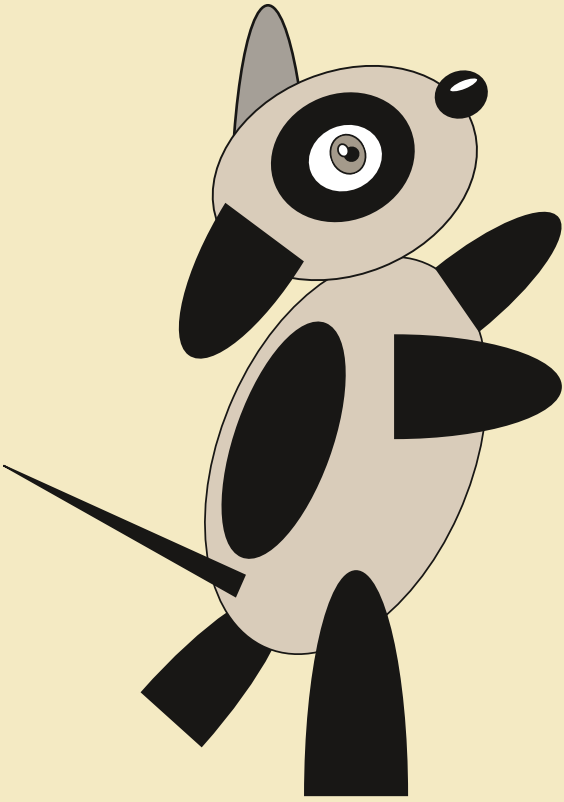
Whether it's surfing to see what you find
or you study to follow your dreams,
like little rootlets that thread through your mind
Understanding is more than it seems.

And who would have thought that the world was so small,
or so large, or so very diverse?
It's a world at your fingertips waiting for all
which the internet helps you traverse.

... Just be discerning, it can be perverse.

Doggy Do

Follow me.
Be mine alone,
little doggy, do.
Stay with me
when I'm at home,
and when I travel, too.
You'll still be mine
when you have grown
and I'll be friend to you.



Shadow Cat

Mary thought she'd seen it all
the day she lost her broach.
She found it with a little ball
underneath the coach.
Shadow, bored in wintertime,
liked to steal small things.
Mary's broach looked oh so fine.
You'd think that cat had wings!
She jumped onto the counter top
when Mary laid it there.
When Mary reached she had to stop.
The broach was seen nowhere.
A fluffy tail the only hint,
bobbed lightly from the room.
Then sitting, wide-eyed, innocent
began to primp and groom.
It's there that Mary solved the crime
despite the Shadow's poise.
She found a string, a watch, a dime
and all of the dog's toys.
Two things had solved the mystery
of Shadow and her stash:
the evidence of history,
incriminating dash.

Friendship Net

In Canada I've always been.
My best friend's from Taiwan
and I'll be speaking Mandarin,
I think, before too long.

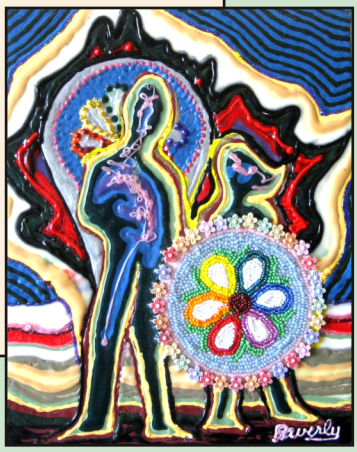
I like to play a baseball game.
My friend, she likes to dance.
And though our tastes aren't quite the same
we meet at every chance.

At one time letters made their flights
o're oceans, sometimes late.
But these days when my pen pal writes,
we have an instant date.

She smiles through my computer
from the other side of earth
We are each other's tutor.
It is learning full of mirth.

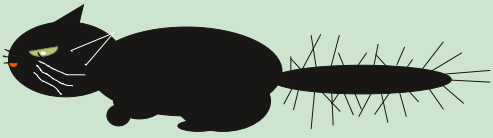
Although I've never shared a space
with her, she is my friend.
I even have a special place
to keep what she may send.

Though someday we may travel,
we've never really met.
For now we will unravel
our lives on the internet.



The Pet Sitter

Jennypuss and Shadowcat
Nick-nack, Puff and Bob,
bored, decide they will attack
Rex, the sleeping dog.
Tippy tips the fishbowl,
frightening Flipper, wetting fur.
Marbles climbs my homework
just to lick herself and purr.
Panther, dashing under foot
makes sister spill some tea.
Peanut guards the food dish
while Mo parrot squawks at me!
Just one pair is well behaved,
lying on a mat,
cuddled up with Noodlepuss
Bratty-Jo the rat.
Last year I pet-sat for friends.
It worked out really well.
This year I've expanded,
my services to sell.
It seemed like such an easy job
the day I placed my ad.
And now I don't know what to tell
my mother and my dad.



The Mental Health Day

Feeling it would never go away,
from my bed, I heard my mother say,
"It's time for school! It's time to start your day."

I felt so tired, though I had slept all night.
The thought of school this day was just a fright.
Another day I knew I'd set it right.

My tummy felt all twisted upside down.
I hoped a fever really could be found.
Was not a nasty flu just going 'round?

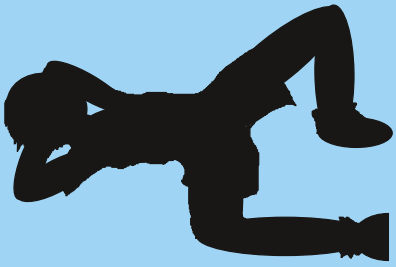
With a thermometer inside my mouth
my tongue felt dry just like a desert drought.
I wished I was escaping to the South.

Then Mother, sitting down beside my bed
told me she thought it was inside my head.
"What is your problem, then?" she smiled and said.

"Our school just had a field trip," I told her.
"There were a lot of germs there, where we were.
She said to stay in bed and not to stir.

Though not exactly rich in fun or stealth
the resting time was good for mental health.
and that was better than the greatest wealth.

It also gave me time to finish my homework!



Grandma and Granddad

Who knows I didn't mean to drop
my chocolate on the rug?
Who doesn't always tell me, "Stop!"
when what I need's a hug?

Who isn't shamed when I come home
all dirty from my play,
and doesn't leave me all alone
when I want them to stay?

Who did my homework, "only once",
and fed me two desserts?
They don't complain about my 'stunts'
or say I'm just a squirt.

Instead they tell me patiently
what they did once, when young,
to try to kindly help me see
effects of what I've done.

They always see the best in me.
They help me when I'm sad.
I always find a welcome knee
with Grandma and Granddad.

Who Wrote on That Wall?

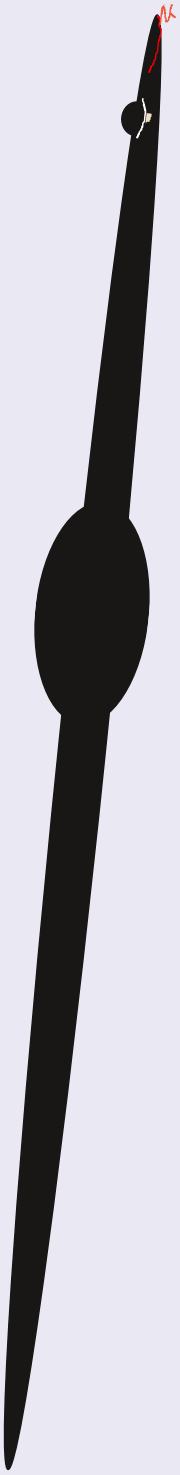
Fresh paint didn't cover it,
the artwork on the wall.
Sis and I crouched, waiting
by the door just in the hall.
wishing that our leisure time
had been spent playing ball.

"Someone scribbled," Mommy said.
"They really have to learn!"
Daddy said, "It's such a mess!
They both can take a turn
cleaning this tomorrow.
They have playtime to earn!"

When they thought we couldn't hear
I heard my mommy say,
"Look. There is a person
and a kitten in a sleigh."
Daddy said, "No! No!
That looks like grasses when they sway."

"I think we have some talent here,"
They nodded. They agreed
"That's no place to express it
but encouraging this seed
could be our next priority
while teaching them to read."

We knew it wasn't over
when we went to bed that night,
unsure about our feeling,
but at least it wasn't fright.
And they still came in to kiss us
before turning out the light.



Grumpy Grampy

Grumpy Grampy was a snake
living with my brother, Jake.
Grumpy grew, and grew, and grew
'till he was longer than you!

One day Jake went out to play.
Guess what! Grumpy ran away.
While we know a snake can't run
we found out how it is done.

Down the stair our reptile slipped.
Quietly he turned and dipped
through the kitchen door and then
Grumpy disappeared again.

Not 'till later did we see
Grumpy sliding by the tea
from the shelving to the floor
under chairs and out the door.

"Catch that snake", my brother cried.
"or he'll find a place to hide!"
Mother got a piece of meat
to tempt him with a little treat.

Then we saw the great big hump,
wider than a snake-sized bump
in his middle. He'd been able
to eat the turkey from the table.

And it slowed him down a lot.
Full of turkey Mom had bought,
sluggish from his turkey prey,
we put Grumpy Gramp away.

The Magic Window

I have a magic window
with a magic frame.
You see a lot of pictures
you never see again.
Yes, in my magic window
I see a stony road.
Some cars go up and down it
and trucks with heavy loads.
Every time I look at it
it fills my heart with joy,
and in my magic window,
I see a girl and boy.

Janey (8)

My Boring Name

My mother named me Kimberley.
I had no choice in that.
The kids at school have cooler names
like Courtenay, Jane and Pat.
Cassandra is a pretty name,
Belinda and Janelle.
My very best friend, Spencer,
has a lovely name as well.
And Remmington is interesting.
I think she'll be a star.
Perhaps your name, to some degree,
determines who you are.
My friend, Maclean, is smart and fun.
He won the science fair.
To me the name 'Kim' seemed so plain,
as if I wasn't there.
Then in a winning essay
I complained about my name.
I wondered with another one
if life would be the same.
Did talent spawn this story
that I did on a whim,
or is it that I'm who I am
because my name is Kim?

Now all the kids are telling me
they wish their name was Kimberley!

Sunflower House

Start it with a little trench.
Dig it in a square
with sides at least a meter long.
You'll grow the walls in there.
Leave the front wall open,
for that will be your door.
Cut the grass inside it
to make an even floor.
Scratch your trench two inches deep.
Make it two inches wide.
Then place at least two packs of seeds
together there inside.
One seed will grow sunflowers.
Use those with big, striped seeds.
The one beside it grows a vine-
blue morning glory weeds.
Each set of two along the trench,
three inches in between,
will soon start looking like a fence,
a wall of leafy green.
The morning glories climb the stalks
of sunflowers that grow
if you will water every day
the seeds you covered so.
And when the plants are tall enough
tie strings across the top
from sunflower to sunflower.
The Glories will not stop.

By midsummer you'll have a space
to share with friends- a shady place.

Cyberbirds

I like to make strange pictures with
the things I find around.
I stack up rocks and build strong forts
with anything I've found.
By far the strangest thing I've made-
(It really defies words)
was when I made a picture
using metal cyber-birds.

My brother's old computer broke,
and while it was a shame,
he let me look inside the case
to see what I could name.
The coloured wires made no sense
but one thing looked absurd.
Across a shiny metal disc,
a robot, cyber bird.

So if you're not so technical, just make yourself a spectacle!

Rainbow

The thunder sounded angry,
rumbling like an old freight train.
The sky was dark.
The air was damp.
The earth was wet with rain.
And rivers down the window
raced to overflow the drain.

The lights began to flicker
as we rushed to close the door.
And mother said
she'd never seen
the likes of it before,
when sudden silence meant
it wasn't raining anymore.

A rainbow touched down softly
as we opened up the latch
By blackened sky
then caught my eye,
a glistening, sunny patch.
The clouds had parted to reveal
this stunning, bright mismatch.

Odd Couple Kids

My sister's space is nothing like my own,
She's always neat. Perfection is her way.
We share a room with one side each our own.
She cleans a lot, while I would rather play.

She told me we would have to share the broom,
that we'd take turns with duties, meaning work,
that every two weeks she would clean the room
and once a month, my turn I dare not to shirk.

It was a simple plan but then it seemed
the room looked not too bad when my turn came.
Some months went by. At last my sister screamed,
"It's still not fair! You have to stop this game."

't was then she placed a piece of masking tape
directly down the middle 'tween our beds.
She threatened that no dust ball dare escape
across this line, or clutter as it spreads.

And that brought peace, despite the half she saw
when to her neat and clean half she'd withdraw.

Like Me For Me

I don't look like a movie star.
Don't think I even can.
But if you're smart, you'll like me lots
for just the way I am.

My friends all come in different shapes
and personalities.
We share our faults, successes, scrapes
without apologies.

You'll meet me sometimes, and although
you may not always see,
our friendship has a chance to grow
if you like me for me.

There's one demand I'm making too,
and that's that you like you for you.

Sky

Sky is freedom
dreamy flight
inky black
or blue and white,
home of sun
and stars at night.
Sky is breath
a part of me.
It reaches space,
and to the sea;
Fascination
endlessly

Andre & Beverly

Breeze

Little breeze, you touch my hair,
tenderly caressing.
Always kind, and always fair,
in this gentle setting.

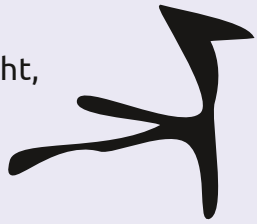
Carried in your soft embrace,
voices in the distance,
like a strange and distant place.
Caught without resistance

Ebbing, flowing, laughter falls
on my ear like chatter,
lapping at my lonely walls.
Then the voices scatter.

Gently pushing me back home,
rustling in the pine trees,
making me feel less alone
is my special friend, breeze.

In Praise of Mistakes

We want to be successful
and not make a mistake.
Some try so hard to do it right,
and if they must, they fake.



Perfection is frustration
if you must learn too fast.
And often when you're rushing it,
the learning doesn't last.

The best will sometimes bumble.
We do the best we can.
Humility for learning's sake
is such a better plan.

So I'll keep trying new things,
however long it takes.
Remember that I may not learn
if I don't make mistakes.

It feels a little scary,
but I know I'll get by.
You never will do anything
if you don't even try.

Skunk Pal

Who would have thought they would bond in the end,
a skunk and a cat and a dog?
All of them living with me, their best friend,
and one quite indifferent frog.

Donald the pup was a gift from my dad
before my menagerie grew.
Then I found Froggy (I thought he looked sad)
and Pal and my kitty cat too.

Frisky the kitten showed up in our yard
from some far and unknown locale
Skunk was a baby, all battered and scarred.
We rescued her. I named her "Pal".

Both of my parents were starting to frown
"That's three pets too many," they said.
Trips to the vet made my parents calm down.
Now we're all one big family instead.

As head of the pets I have much work to do.
My cleaning skills really are stellar.
And all of my friends say that they want one too-
a lame skunk without any smeller.

They say in most cases release to the wild
is by far the best choice for an animal child.
We would have returned Pal back home to the wood
had we thought her chance of survival was good.

Family

I know we sometimes disagree.
This doesn't make me sad,
because my loving family's
not into staying mad.

And when they need help, I'm right there
the best that I can be.
I find some time that I can spare
when my fam'ly needs me.

Some other people, like my friend
have families combined-
at first confusing to extend,
but I don't really mind.

The different kinds of fam'lies we
embrace are ours for free.
They are our first community,
our loving family.

Food Fun

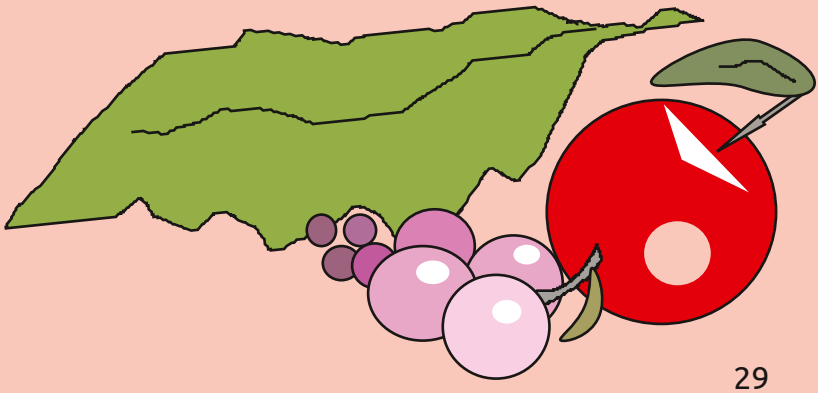
Strawberry shortcakes,
big meringue pies...
All the things my mum bakes
beat food she buys.

Bright flower salad,
lemon and lime,
make me feel so glad,
-fresh every time.

Something a bit odd,
yogurt and cheese
served on a facade
of edible weeds.

Pancakes with maple,
fresh hot mint tea
big, breakfast staple
of food shopping spree.

Better than restaurants,
fresh, fried or stewed,
just like the ancients,
is good, home-cooked food.

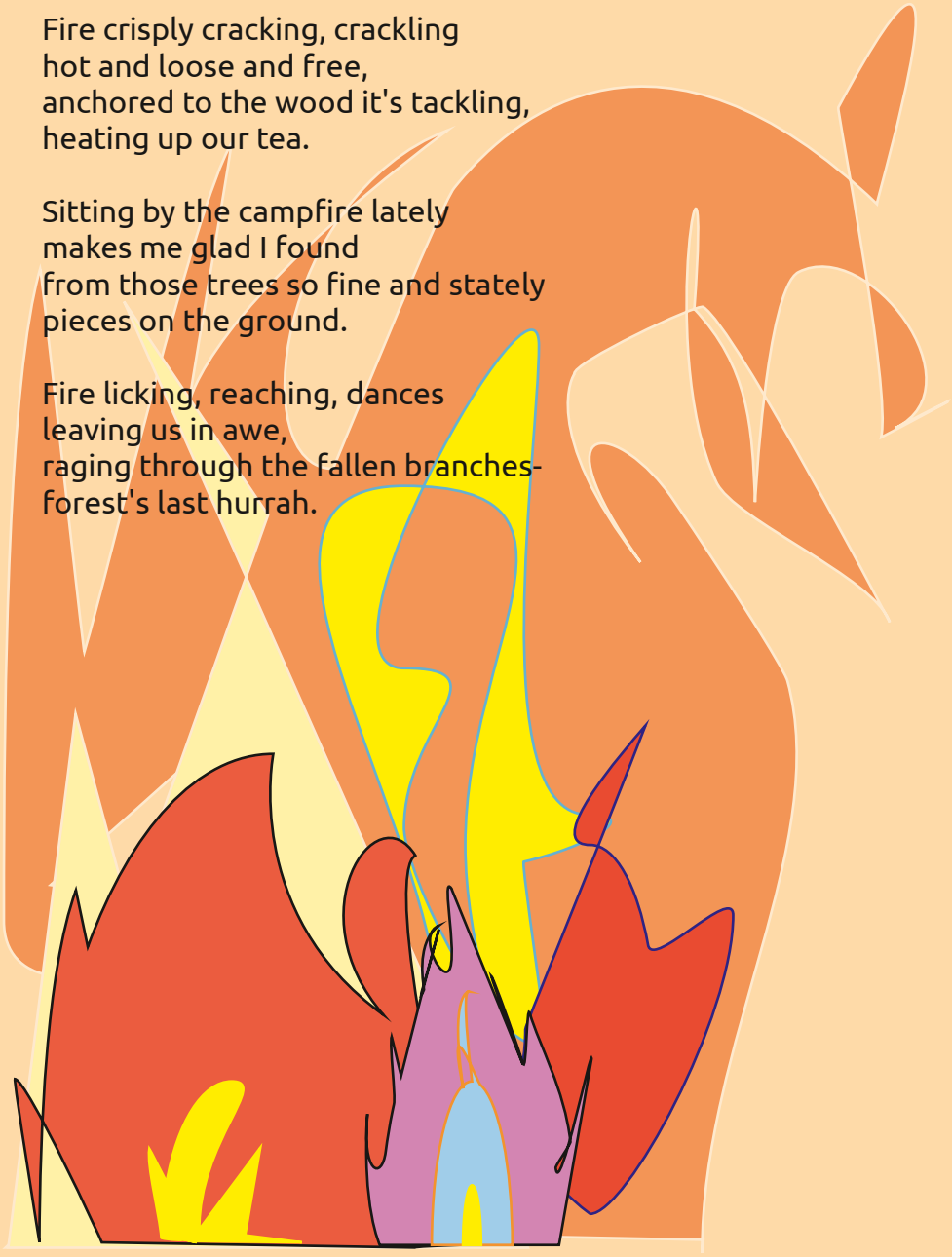


Campfire

Fire crisply cracking, crackling
hot and loose and free,
anchored to the wood it's tackling,
heating up our tea.

Sitting by the campfire lately
makes me glad I found
from those trees so fine and stately
pieces on the ground.

Fire licking, reaching, dances
leaving us in awe,
raging through the fallen branches-
forest's last hurrah.



Ode to Geode

Little crystals, roundly ranged-
Glitter, little jewels.
Forged in heat, with cooling changed
from earth's fiery pools.

Once I held a rocky ball,
dull and plain to see.
Found inside, after its fall
treasure there for me.

Ode to geode's crystal light.
Ode to secret guise.
Beauty hidden from my sight,
better as surprise.

Nasturtiums

The peppery taste of their flowers enhances
a salad, and what's really great-
We could never keep up with their numbers each year
no matter how many we ate.
Nasturtiums keep bugs from the roses and posies
and turnips, tomatoes and peas.
Like flat, fluffy sentries they bob in the breezes
while guarding the garden with ease.

This poem is a true story about a young man's first woodworking project. He made a perfect frame at school in shop class.

First Frame

First project,
so perfect,
justified pride.
Woodworking
framed painting,
talents collide.
Son started.
Mum finished.
Gallery tried.
Sold one time.
So sublime,
customer eyed.
Then, with gloom,
said, "No room."
Have to decide.
Much to pack.
Gave it back.
Won't take the ride.
Now back home,
it is shown,
as was first tried.
Such great cheer
held so dear
where they reside.
Kept for posterity,
now with more clarity
always beside.

His mother used it to frame her artwork and sold it in a gallery. She and her son split the profit. Then the person who bought it gave it back because it wouldn't fit in his suitcase. The family decided to keep this special work of art afterall.

Look—See

It is hardest to look
when you don't want to see
things like
messes, or an unmade bed.
I'd rather just think of where I'd like to be,
or to look out of the window instead.
But I'd better stop dawdling.
My mother can see.
She has eyes in the back of her head.

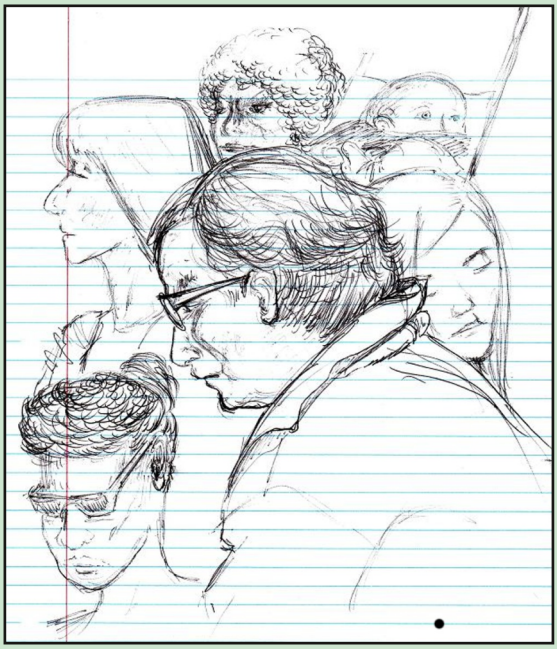
Faces in Places

Faces in places
and places in town,
lit by reflections
of sun going down.

Freed from work spaces
and from the school ground,
carrying cases
and babies around.

Clutching their parcels
and dreamy, they wait,
as the car jostles
and staggers their gate.

Sway, tired faces,
so crowded, alone,
taking the subway
to family and home.



Winter Water

How fast does water have to go
to get away from Jack Frost?
Down the river, bobbing to and fro,
jostling, chunks of ice tossed,
race to find a more convenient place
where the water settles.
where a lake with placid, frozen face
waits for summer's petals.

Sculpting Scribble Snow

Angels, snowmen
all the same
Bridges, tunnels
are a game
Snowballs thudding-
target fun
Melting snowflakes
on my tongue
Frozen branches
squeak on high
sculpted scribbles
in the sky
Cold creations.
Shadows show
pictures in our
scribble snow.

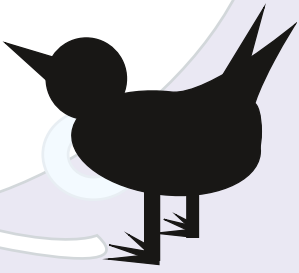
What Did It Do But Snew?

The robins came out from their winter homes
and so did the bobolinks too,
so, what did it do but snew and snew?
so what did it do but snew?

The robins and the bobolinks
changed their song so true
from chirolee and bobolink,
to "What did it do but snew?"

I think that April first may bring
an April Fool to you
for what did it do but snew and snew?
oh, what did it do but snew?

Janey (8)



Spring Blading

Skating through the fresh, spring air,
I might tumble. I don't care!
With my helmet, pads and pants,
learning, I will take that chance.
Safely on the path I swing
'round the corner like a sling.
Wobbly, now, I find my feet
moving me toward the street.
Slower, slower like a plow
I have learned to stop them now.
Growing stronger, feeling brave
after such a brilliant save.
Faster now, I have no fear.
Wind is whistling in my ear.
Tiny leaves on branches gleam
golden green, a lovely scene.
When spring blading I don't mind.
winter skating left behind.

Sun Artist Mockery

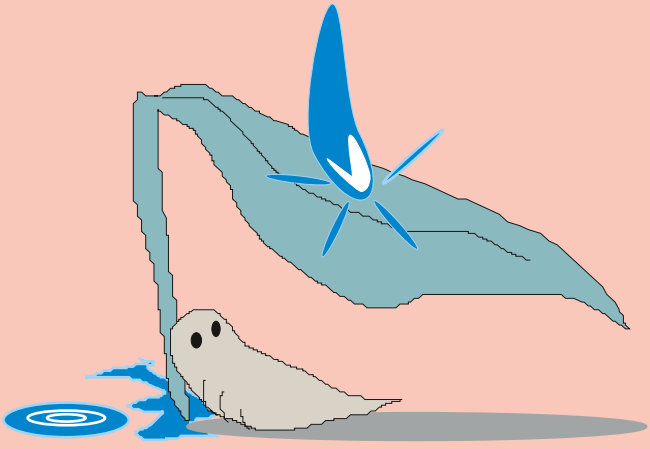
It moved.
At first it glistened on sky's canvas through the trees
but when I tried to paint it, it was gone.
Across my paper with a brush, I chased the little tease,
that brilliant artist's trickster called the sun.

I watched.
It splashed through every leaf and every blade of grass
so deftly. While I tried to keep the pace,
somehow all my copying could not keep up. Alas
I knew that I would never win that race.

I schemed.
I thought that if I tried to paint the shade instead
the deepest shadows might for me stay still.
The sun just reached inside them as it hurried off to bed
and shadow fingers mocked me with their skill.

Summer Swim, Slugs 'n' Bugs

Summer in
a swimming pool,
every day,
is really cool.
In the garden,
lazy slugs
hiding from the
other bugs,
hogging shade,
feel a splash,
droplets as I
make a dash
for the deck
where is laid
pitcher, cups
and lemonaide.



Autumn Magic

Pumpkin pudding,
pumpkin pie,
Autumn leaf-flakes
fill the sky.
Coloured chatter
on the ground,
makes a crunching,
swishing sound.
Crispy wind song,
bending bough
whipping hair
across the brow.
Scent of ice
in the air.
Autumn magic
everywhere.

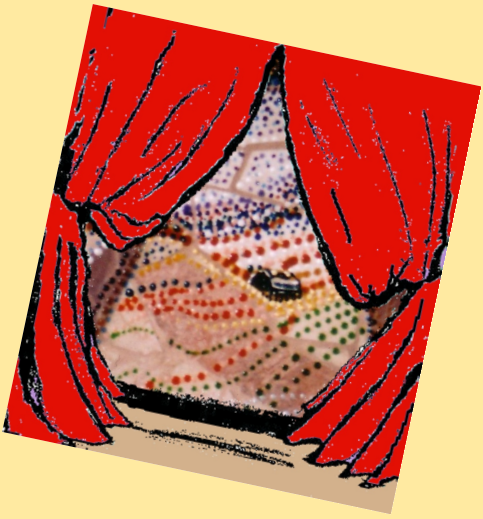
Applesplash

Only in Autumn the apples are freshest
and I like the ripest the best.
Don't forget apple pies sweetened with lemon
and cinnamon added for zest.
Crispy, bright applesplash, seasonal treasure,
with cider completing the fest.

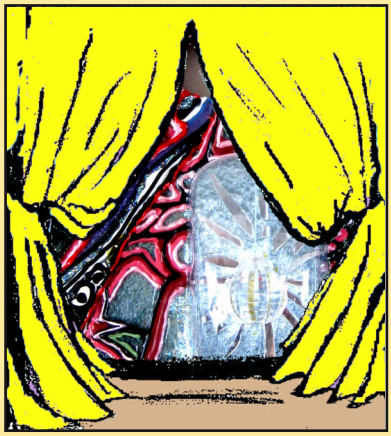
Magic Time Out

Dad said, "Homework!" He was firm.
"But," I said, "I passed this term!"
He said, "No?" I heard him shout,
"Just for that, you have time out!"
"To your room," he said. "Go there!"
"But," I said. "That isn't fair!"
Then I thought that my bad day
didn't have to end that way.
Punished, when I've nothing done,
still can be a lot of fun.
Making magic with my mind
turns a 'time-out' very kind.

Magic curtains, just for me,
parting, show a candy sea.



In the distance, full of charm,
I can see a bubble farm.



If I had to take a quiz,
I don't know what this one is.

Then a knock upon my door
makes me wonder what it's for.
In my doorway, looking sad,
I can see my mum and dad.
"We were wondering," Daddy said,
"if you'd like to play instead.
We admit for all our sakes,
even parents make mistakes,
and this time-out now can halt
seeing that it's not your fault."
I can trust them. This I know.
In small ways they tell me so.
They won't tell me why they worry
and they sometimes make me hurry.

Usually I do not fight.
Somehow it will turn out right.
Someday when I am all grown
and I have kids of my own
I hope they'll forgive me too
if they think I have no clue
why I do the things I do.

I just said, "I love you too."

The Affect of Effect

Affect and effect are often confused
even by many adults.
Meaning 'to influence', 'affect' is used.
'Effect' denotes the results.

Affect, a verb, is describing a change.
Effect is used as a noun.
With correct grammar we could still arrange
an effect affecting a town.

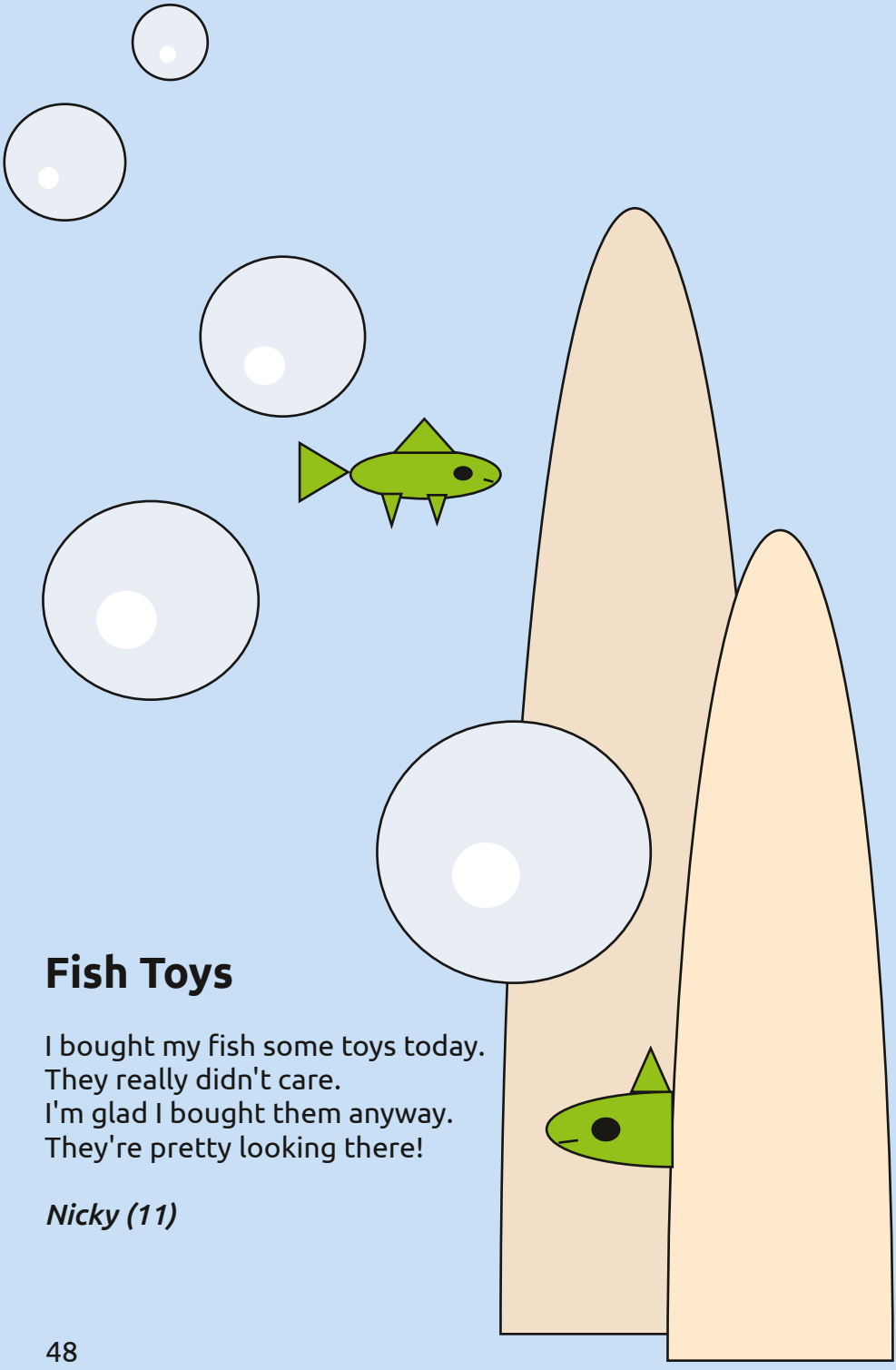
Also correct, the word, effect, can be
a verb meaning, "to bring about".
If when to use which is a puzzle to me,
does this affect or effect my doubt?

"A(n)" & "The"

"The", the one, the only one
"An" is one of many
"The" is always centre stage
"A" could be just any.

"A(n)" or "the" before a noun
will help us all to see
whether its distinctiveness
is needed to agree.

When a noun starts with a vowel
there's something else at play.
Using "an" in place of "a"
is easier to say.



Fish Toys

I bought my fish some toys today.
They really didn't care.
I'm glad I bought them anyway.
They're pretty looking there!

Nicky (11)

Seagulls

Wave- top warriors bob in wait
for a chance at stealing bait.
In their midst, as if for fun,
dancing little flakes of sun

Signs all tell you "Do not feed..."
Don't encourage seagulls' greed.
Always keep the beach front clean.
Just enjoy this lovely scene.

Carefully I guard my lunch
keeping it from that wild bunch.
Then I open up my bag.
It's as if I waved a flag.

Suddenly a cloud of white,
screeching birds has taken flight.
On the beach they crowd around
lest I drop things on the ground.

Sneaking closer, lacking stealth,
closing in on lunch-bag wealth,
brazen seagull snatches crust.
Clearly there is too much trust.

Shocked, I try to shoo the beast.
Seagulls rush to claim the feast,
gobbling bits dropped from my hand,
squabbling on the summer sand.

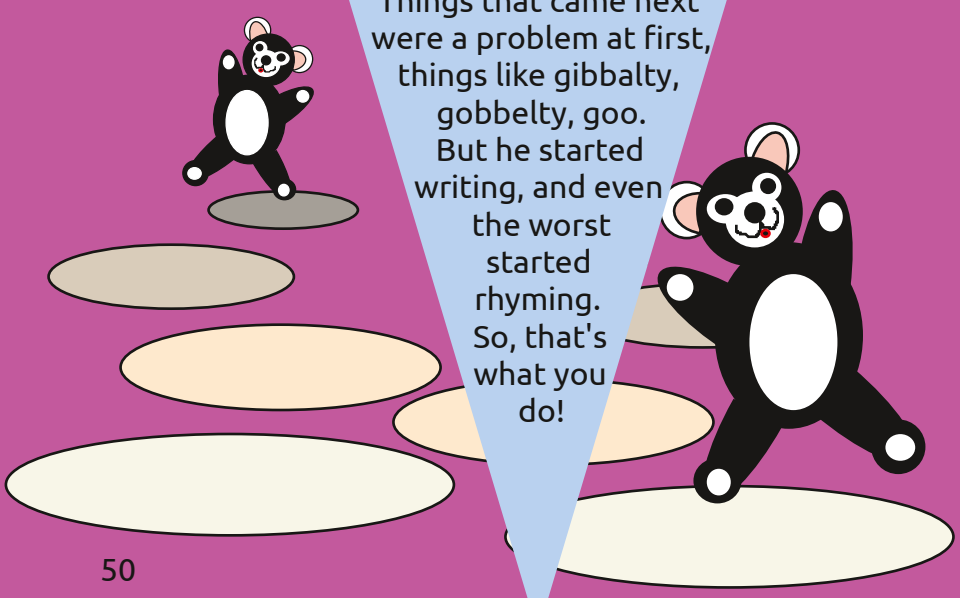
Panda the Poet

Panda the poet was learning to write,
to practice techniques he could use.
He didn't know what to say, or how, quite,
and that's why he turned to his muse.

"Muse," he said, "Help me discover my voice."
"Show me some tricks I can play."
"Panda," said Muse, "art just isn't a choice."
"You must question your heart every day."

Panda looked up. "You mean, let my thoughts flow?"
"But nothing is flowing," he said.
Muse said, "Well, Panda, the trick is to 'Go!'"
"Now try to get out of your head."

Things that came next were a problem at first,
things like gibbalty, gobbelty, goo.
But he started writing, and even the worst
started rhyming.
So, that's what you do!



Party Animal

My cat is the life of the party,
but only when catnip's around.
The rest of the time she's less sporty.
You're lucky if she can be found.

The Beautiful Weed

Tragic, young eyes brightened
as it bobbed into view.
The breeze swept away
the pain of today's rejection
with a beautiful weed
that blossomed in my garden.
If it blooms only once
it has enriched our lives.

I wondered
how many of these
I had cut down
before they could bloom,
in the name of uniformity,
and conformity,
while trying to create
the perfect garden.

I wondered
how many children,
taught to conform-
taught to strive
for another personality,
another reality,
will never treat us
to their own exquisite perfume.

I hope someday
we will always be gifted
with the beauty of these 'weeds'.

Beverly

Beverly Pearl is an artist, writer, poet and educator living in the Georgian Bay area of Ontario Canada.

"Little Cat Snowshoes" is an eclectic mix of artwork and poetry for the young and the young at heart.

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